

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend, without prejudice, the claims as set forth in the following listing of claims, which replaces all prior versions of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1. (original) A method for manufacturing optical preforms, in which one or more layers of glass, doped or undoped, are deposited onto the internal surface of a hollow substrate tube, which deposition is effected by supplying one or more reactive gas mixtures of glass-forming compounds to the interior of the hollow substrate tube and subsequently generating a non-isothermal plasma in the hollow substrate tube, after which the substrate tube provided with layers of glass ~~by means of~~ via a deposition process is subjected to a contraction process for the purpose of forming a massive rod, from which optical fibres are drawn, characterized in that the contraction process comprises the steps of:

- i) providing a hollow substrate tube enveloped by a protective tube, which protective tube is stationary with respect to the hollow substrate tube, with the hollow substrate tube being enveloped by the protective tube along substantially the entire length thereof,
- ii) providing a resonator which surrounds the protective tube,

iii) supplying a plasma-forming gas to the annular space present between the outer circumference of the hollow substrate tube and the inner circumference of the protective tube,

iv) generating a non-isothermal plasma in said annular space,

v) reciprocating the resonator in longitudinal direction with respect to the protective tube for the purpose of contracting the hollow preform into a massive rod.

Claim 2. (original) A method according to claim 1, characterized in that the hollow substrate tube and the protective tube are kept in a horizontal position while steps i)-iv) are being carried out.

Claim 3. (currently amended) A method according to ~~any one or more of the preceding claims~~ claim 1 or claim 2, characterized in that the hollow substrate tube is rotated during step v), followed by controlled cooling thereof.

Claim 4. (currently amended) A method according to ~~any one or more of the preceding claims~~ claim 1, characterized in that the plasma is adapted to the increased volume of the annular space during step v).

Claim 5. (currently amended) A method according to ~~any one or more of the preceding claims~~ claim 1, characterized in that a mixture of argon and oxygen is used as a plasma-forming gas.

Claim 6. (currently amended) A method according to ~~any one or more of the preceding claims~~ claim 1, characterized in that the pressure during the contraction process is <50 mbar, ~~in particular 10-25 mbar~~.

Claim 7. (currently amended) A method according to ~~any one or more of the preceding claims~~ claim 1, characterized in that a gas having a high temperature during the deposition process is introduced into said annular space.

Claim 8. (currently amended) A method according to ~~any one or more of the preceding claims~~ claim 1, characterized in that the protective tube is made of a ceramic material having a higher plasticizing temperature than the material of the hollow substrate tube to be contracted.

Claim 9. (currently amended) A method according to ~~any one or more of the preceding claims~~ claim 1, characterized in that the contraction process comprises an additional step vi), which step vi) comprises the reciprocating of the resonator in longitudinal direction with respect to the protective tube for the purpose of contracting the protective tube.

Claim 10. (currently amended) A method according to ~~any one or more of the preceding claims~~ claim 1, characterized in that the protective tube is provided with cooling means.

Claim 11. (currently amended) A method according to ~~any one or more of the preceding claims~~ claim 1, characterized in that the deposition process and the contraction process are carried out in ~~one and~~ the same device.

Claim 12. (currently amended) A method according to ~~any one or more of the preceding claims~~ claim 1, characterized in that the contraction process is carried out following ~~on~~ the deposition process.

Claim 13. (currently amended) A method according to
~~any one or more of the preceding claims~~ claim 1,
characterized in that one or more glass-forming compounds
~~is (are)~~ are added to the gas used in step iii).

Claim 14. (currently amended) A method according to
~~any one or more of the preceding claims~~ claim 1,
characterized in that the contraction into a fully
massive rod is terminated prematurely in step v), for
which contraction the same plasma as used in the
deposition process and/or the plasma generated in the
annular space may be used.

Claim 15. (currently amended) An optical fibre characterized in that the refractive index contrast

$$\Delta_i = \frac{n_i^2 - n_{cl}^2}{2 \cdot n_i^2} \cdot 100\%$$

wherein:

Δ_i = refractive index contrast of specific layer i,

n_i = refractive index of layer i,

n_{cl} = refractive index of the cladding, i.e. the outer layer of the fibre,

has a value according to which ~~$\Delta_i > 2.5\%$~~ $\Delta_i > 3\%$.

Claim 16. (canceled)

Claim 17. (currently amended) An optical fibre,
characterized in that in that the thermal coefficient of
expansion

$$\alpha = \frac{l}{l_0} \cdot \frac{\Delta l}{\Delta T} [K^{-1}]$$

measured at a temperature of 25-300~~°C~~°C, wherein:

l = length at T_1

l_0 = length at T_0

$\Delta T = (T_1 - T_0)$

$\Delta l = (l - l_0)$

has a value according to which $\alpha > \cancel{3.4}$, 3.4×10^{-6} K^{-1} .

Claim 18. (currently amended) An optical fibre
according to claim 17, characterized in that $\alpha > \cancel{4.0}$,
 4.0×10^{-6} K^{-1} .

Claim 19. (canceled)

Claim 20. (new) A method according to claim 1,
characterized in that the pressure during the contraction
process is between about 10 mbar and 25 mbar.